AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An optical film comprising a transparent support and a linearly polarizing layer which selectively transmits polarized light and which selectively reflects or scatters other polarized light, wherein the linearly polarizing layer contains a liquid crystal compound represented by the following formula (I), wherein the compound has a fixed alignment:

(I) Ar^1-C≡C-Ar^3-C≡C-Ar^2

in which each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent aromatic hydrocarbon group, and Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic hydrocarbon group.

Claims 2-5 (Canceled)

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The optical film as defined in claim 1, wherein each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent cyano-substituted aromatic hydrocarbon group~~, and Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic group~~.

Claim 7 (Canceled)

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The optical film as defined in claim 1, wherein ~~each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent aromatic group, Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic group, and~~ at least one of Ar^1, Ar^2 and Ar^3 has a substituent group containing hydroxyl.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The optical film as defined in claim 1, wherein the linearly polarizing layer comprises an optically isotropic phase and an optically anisotropic phase.

Claim 10 (Original): The optical film as defined in claim 9, wherein the optically anisotropic phase contains the compound represented by the formula (I).

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The optical film as defined in claim 1, wherein the film has a polarizing plane perpendicular to a surface plane of the film, and wherein the film at the polarizing plane has the maximum transmittance for all rays along the transmittance axis of more than 75% and the minimum transmittances for all rays along the non-transmittance axis of less than 60%.

Claim 12 (Original): The optical film as defined in claim 9, wherein the film has the minimum difference between the refractive index of the optically isotropic phase and that of the optically anisotropic phase of less than 0.05 along a direction in a surface plane of the film.

Claim 13 (Original): The optical film as defined in claim 1, wherein the compound represented by the formula (I) has a polymerizable group.

Claim 14 (Original): The optical film as defined in claim 9, wherein the optically isotropic phase or the optically anisotropic phase is a discontinuous phase having a mean particle size of 0.01 to 1.0 μm.

Claim 15 (Original): The optical film as defined in claim 9, wherein the optically isotropic phase is a continuous phase while the optically anisotropic phase is a discontinuous phase.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The optical film as defined in claim 1, wherein the linearly polarizing layer is formed by stretching the film by ten times or less.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): A polarizing plate comprising a polarizing element of light-scattering type and a polarizing element of light-absorbing type, said polarizing element of light-scattering type selectively transmitting polarized light and selectively reflecting or scattering other polarized light, and said polarizing element of light-absorbing type selectively transmitting polarized light and selectively absorbing other polarized light, wherein the polarizing element of light-scattering type has a linearly polarizing layer comprising an optically isotropic phase and an optically anisotropic phase, wherein the polarizing element of light-scattering type has a polarizing plane perpendicular to a surface plane of the polarizing element, the polarizing element of light-scattering type at the polarizing plane has the maximum transmittance for all rays along the transmittance axis of more than 75% and the minimum transmittances for all rays along the non-transmittance axis of less than 60%, wherein an axis having the polarizing plane giving the maximum transmittance for all rays is essentially parallel to the transmittance axis of the polarizing

element of light-absorbing type, and wherein the optically anisotropic phase contains a compound represented by the following formula (I), wherein the compound has a fixed alignment:

(I) Ar^1-C≡C-Ar^3-C≡C-Ar^2

in which each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent aromatic hydrocarbon group, and Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic hydrocarbon group.

Claim 18 (Original): A liquid crystal display which comprises a liquid crystal cell in which a liquid crystal compound is sealed between a pair of substrates having a transparent electrode and a pixel electrode, and also which comprises a pair of polarizing plates sandwiching the liquid crystal cell, wherein the optical film defined in claim 1 is provided between a backlight and the polarizing plate on the backlight side of the cell.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): A liquid crystal display comprising a backlight, a polarizing plate, a liquid crystal cell and another polarizing plate in this order, wherein the polarizing plate placed between the backlight and the liquid crystal cell comprises a polarizing element of light-scattering type and a polarizing element of light-absorbing type, said polarizing element of light-scattering type selectively transmitting polarized light and selectively reflecting or scattering other polarized light, and said polarizing element of light-absorbing type selectively transmitting polarized light and selectively absorbing other polarized light, wherein the polarizing element of light-scattering type has a linearly polarizing layer comprising an optically isotropic phase and an optically anisotropic phase, wherein the polarizing element of light-scattering type has a polarizing plane perpendicular to a surface plane of the polarizing element, the polarizing element of light-scattering type at the

polarizing plane has the maximum transmittance for all rays along the transmittance axis of more than 75% and the minimum transmittances for all rays along the non-transmittance axis of less than 60%, wherein an axis having the polarizing plane giving the maximum transmittance for all rays is essentially parallel to the transmittance axis of the polarizing element of light-absorbing type, and wherein the optically anisotropic phase contains a compound represented by the following formula (I), wherein the compound has a fixed alignment:

(I) Ar^1-C≡C-Ar^3-C≡C-Ar^2

in which each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent aromatic hydrocarbon group, and Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic hydrocarbon group.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The optical film as defined in claim 13, wherein the alignment is fixed by polymerization of the compound represented by the formula (I).

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The optical film as defined in claim 20, wherein the polymerization of the compound represented by the formula (I) is conducted by exposing the film to ultraviolet light.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The optical film as defined in claim 1, wherein the alignment is fixed by crosslinking of boric acid.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The optical film as defined in claim 22, wherein the crosslinking of the boric acid is conducted by immersing the film in a solution of the boric acid.

Claim 24 (New): An optical film comprising a transparent support and a linearly polarizing layer which selectively transmits polarized light and which selectively reflects or scatters other polarized light, wherein the linearly polarizing layer contains a liquid crystal compound represented by the following formula (I), wherein the compound has a fixed alignment:

(I) Ar^1-C≡C-Ar^3-C≡C-Ar^2

in which each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent aromatic group, Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic group, and at least one of the aromatic groups of Ar^1, Ar^2 and Ar^3 is an aromatic heterocyclic group.

Claim 25 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent aromatic hydrocarbon group, and Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic five-membered heterocyclic group, a divalent condensed aromatic five-membered heterocyclic group or a divalent aromatic group formed by connecting two or three groups thereof.

Claim 26 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent aromatic hydrocarbon group, and Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic six-membered heterocyclic group, a divalent condensed aromatic six-membered heterocyclic group or a divalent aromatic group formed by connecting two or three groups thereof.

Claim 27 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein Ar^1 is a monovalent aromatic hydrocarbon group, a monovalent aromatic five-membered heterocyclic group or a monovalent condensed aromatic five-membered heterocyclic group, Ar^2 is a monovalent aromatic five-membered heterocyclic group or a monovalent aromatic hydrocarbon group, and Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic hydrocarbon group, a divalent aromatic five-membered heterocyclic group, a divalent condensed aromatic five-membered heterocyclic group, a divalent aromatic six-membered heterocyclic group, a divalent condensed aromatic six-membered heterocyclic group or a divalent aromatic group formed by connecting two or three groups thereof.

Claim 28 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent cyano-substituted aromatic group, and Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic group.

Claim 29 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein Ar^1 is a monovalent aromatic group, Ar^2 is a monovalent aromatic six-membered heterocyclic group, and Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic hydrocarbon group, a divalent aromatic five-membered heterocyclic group, a divalent condensed aromatic five-membered heterocyclic group, a divalent aromatic six-membered heterocyclic group, a divalent condensed aromatic six-membered heterocyclic group or a divalent aromatic group formed by connecting two or three groups thereof.

Claim 30 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein at least one of Ar^1, Ar^2 and Ar^3 has a substituent group containing hydroxyl.

Claim 31 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein the linearly polarizing layer comprises an optically isotropic phase and an optically anisotropic phase.

Claim 32 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 31, wherein the optically anisotropic phase contains the compound represented by the formula (I).

Claim 33 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein the film has a polarizing plane perpendicular to a surface plane of the film, and wherein the film at the polarizing plane has the maximum transmittance for all rays along the transmittance axis of more than 75% and the minimum transmittances for all rays along the non-transmittance axis of less than 60%.

Claim 34 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 31, wherein the film has the minimum difference between the refractive index of the optically isotropic phase and that of the optically anisotropic phase of less than 0.05 along a direction in a surface plane of the film.

Claim 35 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein the compound represented by the formula (I) has a polymerizable group.

Claim 36 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 31, wherein the optically isotropic phase or the optically anisotropic phase is a discontinuous phase having a mean particle size of 0.01 to 1.0 μm.

Claim 37 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 31, wherein the optically isotropic phase is a continuous phase while the optically anisotropic phase is a discontinuous phase.

Claim 38 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein the linearly polarizing layer is formed by stretching the film by ten times or less.

Claim 39 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 35, wherein the alignment is fixed by polymerization of the compound represented by the formula (I).

Claim 40 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 39, wherein the polymerization of the compound represented by the formula (I) is conducted by exposing the film to ultraviolet light.

Claim 41 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 24, wherein the alignment is fixed by crosslinking of boric acid.

Claim 42 (New): The optical film as defined in claim 41, wherein the crosslinking of the boric acid is conducted by immersing the film in a solution of the boric acid.

Claim 43 (New): A polarizing plate comprising a polarizing element of light-scattering type and a polarizing element of light-absorbing type, said polarizing element of light-scattering type selectively transmitting polarized light and selectively reflecting or scattering other polarized light, and said polarizing element of light-absorbing type selectively transmitting polarized light and selectively absorbing other polarized light, wherein the polarizing element of light-scattering type has a linearly polarizing layer comprising an optically isotropic phase and an optically anisotropic phase, wherein the polarizing element of light-scattering type has a polarizing plane perpendicular to a surface plane of the polarizing element, the polarizing element of light-scattering type at the polarizing plane has the maximum transmittance for all rays along the transmittance axis of more than 75% and the minimum transmittances for all rays along the non-transmittance axis of less than 60%, wherein an axis having the polarizing plane giving the maximum transmittance for all rays is essentially parallel to the transmittance axis of the polarizing element of light-absorbing type, and wherein the optically anisotropic phase contains a compound represented by the following formula (I), wherein the compound has a fixed alignment:

(I) Ar^1-C≡C-Ar^3-C≡C-Ar^2

in which each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent aromatic group, Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic group, and at least one of the aromatic groups of Ar^1, Ar^2 and Ar^3 is an aromatic heterocyclic group.

Claim 44 (New): A liquid crystal display which comprises a liquid crystal cell in which a liquid crystal compound is sealed between a pair of substrates having a transparent electrode and a pixel electrode, and also which comprises a pair of polarizing plates

sandwiching the liquid crystal cell, wherein the optical film defined in claim 24 is provided between a backlight and the polarizing plate on the backlight side of the cell.

Claim 45 (New): A liquid crystal display comprising a backlight, a polarizing plate, a liquid crystal cell and another polarizing plate in this order, wherein the polarizing plate placed between the backlight and the liquid crystal cell comprises a polarizing element of light-scattering type and a polarizing element of light-absorbing type, said polarizing element of light-scattering type selectively transmitting polarized light and selectively reflecting or scattering other polarized light, and said polarizing element of light-absorbing type selectively transmitting polarized light and selectively absorbing other polarized light, wherein the polarizing element of light-scattering type has a linearly polarizing layer comprising an optically isotropic phase and an optically anisotropic phase, wherein the polarizing element of light-scattering type has a polarizing plane perpendicular to a surface plane of the polarizing element, the polarizing element of light-scattering type at the polarizing plane has the maximum transmittance for all rays along the transmittance axis of more than 75% and the minimum transmittances for all rays along the non-transmittance axis of less than 60%, wherein an axis having the polarizing plane giving the maximum transmittance for all rays is essentially parallel to the transmittance axis of the polarizing element of light-absorbing type, and wherein the optically anisotropic phase contains a compound represented by the following formula (I), wherein the compound has a fixed alignment:

(I) Ar^1-C≡C-Ar^3-C≡C-Ar^2

in which each of Ar^1 and Ar^2 independently is a monovalent aromatic group, Ar^3 is a divalent aromatic group, and at least one of the aromatic groups of Ar^1, Ar^2 and Ar^3 is an aromatic heterocyclic group.